

Central Sacramento County Groundwater Forum

GroundwaterDigest

September 2003



MWH

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A topographic map background with contour lines and a blue boundary. The map shows a grid of contour lines with labels such as 20, 40, and 60. A prominent blue boundary line runs across the map, with a shaded area inside it. The left side of the map features a blue and white textured area representing water or a forest.

Section 1

Introduction

Introduction

Section I

Groundwater in central Sacramento County has many users and uses. To help protect the health and viability of the groundwater subbasin in central Sacramento County (**Central Basin**), interested groups (**stakeholders**) have come together under the aegis of the Sacramento Area Water Forum Successor Effort to create the Central Sacramento County Groundwater Forum (**CSCGF**).

Acting on behalf of the Water Forum Successor Effort, the Sacramento City-County Office of Water Planning entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Water Resources (**DWR**) to support discussions among stakeholders representing all segments of the community with an interest in developing a groundwater management plan for the Central Basin. Stakeholders were selected as a result of an area-wide assessment performed to identify concerns and develop a program for the stakeholders to work together. Interviews were held with 100 stakeholders, and as a result, 6 interest groups were identified: agricultural and agricultural-residential groundwater users, business, environmental/community organizations, local governments/public agencies, and water purveyors. Each interest group is represented by five individuals, who participated in designing the collaborative process now known as CSCGF.

Under the sponsorship of the Water Forum Successor Effort, CSCGF is working to develop recommendations for sustaining Central Basin groundwater as a resource for the community and the environment. As part of CSCGF's efforts, information about Central Basin groundwater was presented in monthly meetings during an education phase to help participants reach a common understanding of current conditions in the Central Basin. In the next phase, stakeholders must negotiate how groundwater in the Central Basin will be managed. To prepare for those discussions, stakeholders may want to review information provided during the education phase. Therefore, this Groundwater Digest summarizes educational material presented since February 2002 and also responds to "frequently asked questions" collected during the meetings and summarized below.

Central Basin

Common name for the groundwater subbasin in the central portion of Sacramento County.

stakeholders

Persons, agencies, groups, or other interested parties who have a "stake" in a common issue, project, etc.

CSCGF

Central Sacramento County Groundwater Forum

A group of stakeholders formed under the aegis of the Water Forum Successor Effort to develop recommendations for Central Basin groundwater.

DWR

California Department of Water Resources

State agency responsible for managing the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies to benefit California residents and to protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments.

Central Sacramento County Groundwater Forum

CSCGF is working to develop mutually agreed upon recommendations for sustaining Central Basin groundwater as a resource for the community and the environment. These recommendations will be presented to the Water Forum Successor Effort for review and approval and forwarded to the relevant public agencies for implementation, as appropriate.

Summary of Frequently Asked Questions

Facts and Figures

Many questions were asked about the Central Basin, groundwater, groundwater agencies, concepts, use, and levels, and land use. Section 2 discusses these topics and reviews facts and figures presented during CSCGF meetings.

How would groundwater be managed?

Many questions were also asked about how groundwater would be managed. Groundwater management options are discussed in Section 4. However, stakeholders will determine, in an interest-based negotiation process, how Central Basin groundwater will be managed within the framework of the management option they choose.

Will groundwater management encourage development?

Concern was expressed that groundwater management would favor development and it was suggested that development could be restricted. However, land use decisions ultimately control growth. Such decisions are the prerogative of Sacramento County and the cities located within the Central Basin. Groundwater management is essential to protect the long-term viability of the Central Basin for any growth scenarios adopted by the cities and Sacramento County. Again, stakeholders are responsible for setting the parameters of groundwater management for the Central Basin. Since CSCGF includes members representing all segments of the community that have an interest in groundwater, a broad diversity of interests are represented in the negotiation process. See section 4 for a description of various groundwater management options.

How will groundwater management affect groundwater wells?

Questions were asked about the effect of management on groundwater levels and wells, whether groundwater users would incur costs, and if wells would be metered. Section 2 discusses recharge and sustainable yield; decisions about costs and metering will be made by the stakeholders who negotiate the groundwater management plan (Section 4).

How will groundwater management address contamination?

Groundwater contamination in the Central Basin and specific contaminated sites were subjects of concern and many questions. Section 2 briefly discusses locations and types of contamination and a groundwater contamination investigation that will be performed to provide current and detailed information on contaminants in the Central Basin.

Can conservation, recycling, water purchases/sales, and water storage help meet water supply needs?

See Section 2 of the Groundwater Digest.

How will groundwater management affect the Cosumnes River and other natural resources?

Section 1 discusses support for Cosumnes River restoration efforts as a potential advantage of groundwater management; Section 2 explains basin recharge, contains a figure showing the Cosumnes River and other rivers in the Central Basin, and discusses recharge in terms of sustainable yield.

Organization of the Groundwater Digest

The Groundwater Digest is divided into the following four sections:

Introduction – Presents the purpose of the Groundwater Digest and a summary of frequently asked questions, and describes the organization of the digest.

Facts and Figures – Briefly summarizes the Water Forum Agreement, discusses the advantages and disadvantages of groundwater management, and contains a primer of groundwater terms and concepts.

Groundwater Rights – Lists and defines various types of rights exercised over water in the State of California.

Governance Options – Lists five governance methods that could be used to manage groundwater and gives details on three methods that may be the most feasible for the Central Basin.

Supplemental information includes the following:

References – Contains sources used in writing this document.

Frequently Asked Questions – Contains a list of “frequently asked questions” sorted into categories.

Glossary – Contains definitions of terms that are highlighted in the text in **brown** and includes definitions or explanations of other terms that are important when discussing groundwater and groundwater management.